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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2442

Jan. 5, 1990

WE'RE GOING INTO 1990 with nearly 34 million acres of highly erodible cropland enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program. It's the largest long-term cropland retirement program in U.S. history, surpassing the 28.7 million in the Soil Bank program of the 1950's. USDA has accepted 34,815 bids from the ninth signup to place an additional 3.3 million acres under ten-year contracts. North & South Dakota led in acres contracted. Contact: Bob Feist (202) 447-6789.

CONSERVATION TO REDUCE SOIL EROSION -- The Conservation Reserve Program is expected to reduce soil erosion on the nation's cropland by about 20 percent when the conservation practices are installed, according to Wilson Scaling, chief of USDA's Soil Conservation Service. "We already can see the benefits of the program -- in less sedimentation, increased habitat for wildlife and improved water quality," he says. Contact: Diana Morse (202) 447-7547.

OLDER WOMEN MAY NEED MORE VITAMIN D -- Older women may need more vitamin D than previously recommended to get through the dark days of winter, a USDA scientist says. Elizabeth Krall says Vitamin D aids the body in absorbing calcium and an inadequate intake during the sun-starved days of winter can mean less calcium for the bones. Contact: Judy McBride (301) 344-4095.

AQUACULTURE CONFERENCE SET -- Louisiana State University will sponsor the fourth annual Louisiana Aquaculture Conference and Trade Show at the Bellemont Hotel & Convention Center in Baton Rouge, Feb. 8 - 9. The conference will address the economics of aquaculture in Louisiana, marketing and legal restrictions. Contact: Gary Jensen (504) 388-4141.

0-25 SIGNUP DATES -- Signup in the new 0-25 program for soybeans will be Jan. 16 through Feb. 16 for 1990 crops. Since sunflowers and safflowers may also be planted on conservation use acres as approved non-program crops, producers do not need to sign up for those crops. Producers can get more information at their local USDA county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office. Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 447-8206.

"HOW TO" VIDEO ON CONSERVATION -- An hour-long "how-to" videotape will be available to farmers early this year to help them implement their conservation plans. "Conservation on Your Own," produced by USDA's Soil Conservation Service and the National Association of Conservation Districts, features eight segments on widely used soil conservation practices, such as crop residue management, field borders, contour buffer strips and windbreaks. For a brochure on the video, contact: Mary Cressell (202) 382-0558.

USDA'S RADIO NEWSLINE increased its service to you last year, Brenda Curtis reports. During 1989, USDA RADIO had 233 more stories than in 1988. And, the number of calls to the USDA Newsline increased by 80. Actual figures are:

	1988	1989
Number of stories	1,904	2,137
With actualities	1,618	1,873
Without	286	264
Total calls	22,570	22,650

FOREIGN FACTS -- It's new and it's packed with facts and figures -- and it's all about global agriculture -- from Algeria to Zimbabwe. We're talking about "Foreign Agriculture 1989," a quick, convenient guide to recent production and trade patterns in 65 countries. Free copies to media only. For a copy, contact: Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445.

DEAD WEED MEANS DEAD SLUGS -- Most gardeners and producers would agree: The only good slug is a dead slug. Now, a USDA scientist has found dead quackgrass kills slugs. "Killed quackgrass releases a compound into the soil that is a nerve poison highly specific to slugs," says Roger D. Hagin. Slugs are especially troublesome in humid areas and have taken a heavy toll in West Coast strawberry fields and citrus orchards. On the East Coast, they interfere with corn production. Contact: Roger Hagin (607) 255-1712.

ANIMAL DAMAGE COMMITTEE TO MEET -- The National Animal Damage Control Advisory Committee will hold its annual meeting Jan. 23-24 in Arlington, Va. The meeting, which is open to the public, will meet from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. "Wild animals have a place in nature," says Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Jo Ann Smith, "but problems arise when they attack crops and livestock or threaten human safety." Contact: Questa Glenn (301) 436-7799.

WE STILL WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU -- We mailed survey forms to TV broadcasters in December asking for feedback on our TV services. If you haven't sent the form back yet, it's not too late to take a minute to fill it out and return it to us. If you didn't receive a survey form and want to tell us what you think, call Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445, and she'll be happy to send you a form.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1700 -- Some farmers are giving up the more intensive, specialized type of farming for a more diverse ag lifestyle. Brenda Curtis reports on one program that helps farmers in this regard. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 min. documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1182 -- Food prices & the "big freeze;" the food you eat affects your baby, too; the disposable diaper dilemma; nutritious snacks; microwave myths. (Weekly reel f 2-1/2 - 3 min. consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1689 -- USDA News Highlights; dairy supports reduced; signup announced for 0-25 soybean program; the Christmas freeze squeeze; a 1990 export decline? (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1301 -- Sonograms & livestock; understanding cleft palate; almanac for farmers; modeling the environment; sexing livestock. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Thurs., Jan. 11, U.S. crop production (includes freeze assessment), grain stocks report, world ag supply & demand; Fri., Jan. 12, world ag production, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation; Mon., Jan. 15, is a federal holiday; Tues., Jan. 17, crop/weather update, livestock & poultry outlook, horticultural export report; Thurs., Jan. 18, milk production.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m. EST each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on rural leadership; Will Pemble on USDA research to control suburban flies; a story about wetland preservation from Mike Thomas of the University of Missouri; Lisa Telder of Michigan State University on the new Fuji apple; Gary Beaumont of the University of Illinois on a comeback for hedgerows.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA Chief Meteorologist Norton Strommen with a weather update; USDA Economist Greg Gajewski with a short & long term agricultural outlook; USDA Economist Kate Buckley on the effects of the southern freeze on citrus in Florida & Texas; USDA Economist Verner Grise with the latest tobacco situation & outlook.

AGRICULTURE UPDATE -- News releases from USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, presented in a news desk format.

Available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30-7:45 p.m., EST, Transponder 12D
SATURDAY 10:30-11:15 a.m., EST, Transponder 10D
MONDAY 8:30-9:15 a.m., EST, Transponder 12D
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)

OFFMIKE

THOSE...wooly bear caterpillars are fairly accurate weather predictors, says Ron Hendren (WTAD, Quincy, Ill.) In his area last year, they were black-brown-black which indicates severe-mild-severe conditions. Sure enough, this past December was the coldest in 105 years, and when we talked by phone in early January it was 45 degrees outside the studio. Ron figures another nasty spell is ahead. Our congratulations to Ron. The Illinois Pork Producers selected him for its agricultural communicator of the year award, to be presented at its Jan. 31 - Feb. 2 convention in Peoria.

ICE...storm last month dropped the station's 2,000-foot tower, says Dix Harper (WRAL-TV, Raleigh, N.C.). Six-inch ice on guy wires, which melted on the side facing the sun, also felled a nearby station's tower at the antenna farm. WRAL-TV purchased time on another station and engineers got it back on the air in three hours.

PART:...of the new team at RFD-TV in Omaha, Neb., is Mike Hansen, sales manager. Mike moved from WOW Omaha. Kim Dlouhy, who has been associate agri-service director for WOW, will replace Mike.

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ONLY...one inch of snow on the ground, says Howard Klingler (KNUJ/KXLP, New Ulm, Minn.), and the region entered winter in a very dry condition. Rain this April and May will be necessary to produce a crop. Howard said the Extension Service in his area is offering more programs to producers than ever before.

RETURNING...to school full-time to complete work on a master's degree is Tyson Gair (Mississippi State Ag Info Dept.). Scott Huffman assumes responsibilities for TV feature production.

GROWTH...at Ag Day has been good during the year. Al Pell (Ag Day, Lafayette, Ind.) says the service is now satellite fed to 37 stations. His nice comments about the USDA TV News Service were much appreciated and forwarded to the staff.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Vic Powell".

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division